

Russia to build branch of oil pipeline to China

06-04-05 Russian presidential adviser Viktor Ivanov said the government plans to construct a branch of its oil pipeline to transport oil to China from eastern Siberia.

Ivanov's remarks are seen as prioritising China over Japan, which has proposed Russia build a pipeline from Angarsk, near Lake Baikal, to Perevoznaya, near Nakhodka in Russia's Far East. Japan and China had put forward different routes for the pipeline to get access to the Russian oil. Ivanov told that Russia's plan was fully in line with China's hopes and its economic development program and that crude oil deliveries to China, so far by rail, were estimated to reach 10 mm tons this year.

Ivanov's remarks are possibly aimed at assuring China the adequate supply of its oil before Russia and Japan hold an intergovernmental meeting on April 22 as part of preparations for Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Japan. This was the first time that a key Russian official has clearly stated giving China priority by saying it will construct a branch line of the pipeline to China from Skovorodino near the Russia-China border.

Meanwhile, Ivanov also confirmed that Russia will build an oil pipeline linking Angarsk and Perevoznaya as proposed by Japan. Ivanov's remarks could be taken as a tactic to draw further financial support from Japan, which has offered assistance for the pipeline project on condition that Russia favours its proposal, some analysts said.

Last December, the Russian government announced its decision to construct an oil pipeline on the Japanese-proposed Pacific route without commenting on plans for the Chinese-proposed line.

Source: Kyodo News